

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release September 9, 1977

Levitt 202/343-5634

CALIFORNIA GOLDEN TROUT SUBSPECIES PROPOSED AS THREATENED

California' Little Kern golden trout has been proposed for addition to the list of threatened species because forest management plans and hybridization from introduced rainbow trout threaten its existence, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

The proposal, published in the September 9, 1977, Federal Register, also lists the habitat believed to be critical to the survival of the species. Interested persons have until December 1, 1977, to comment on the proposed rulemaking.

In the Little Kern River watershed, the water quality of the streams inhabited by this fish is generally good. However, some forest management plans now under consideration call for logging activities in a portion of the drainage basin where the trout occurs. This could result in an alteration of existing water quality by increasing temperature and siltation which could seriously threaten the survival of the species, Fish and Wildlife Service biologists believe. Most of the habitat that would be affected is in the Sequoia National Forest.

Another factor in the decline of this species is the hybridization which has occurred since rainbow trout were introduced into the Little Kern River system in the 1930's. At present, pure populations of Little Kern golden trout exist only in headwater streams which were not stocked with rainbow trout or which have barrier falls that have prevented upstream migration of rainbows.

If the trout were listed as threatened, sport fishing would not necessarily be prohibited since the proposal leaves management of the species up to the State of California, which currently allows limited sport fishing. Such fishing is not considered a threat. Both the U.S. Forest Service and the State of California support the listing of this subspecies as threatened.

Comments and material concerning this proposed rulemaking, preferably in triplicate, should be sent to the Director (FWS/OES), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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